

CHAPTER D20

FAITH, WORKS, AND SALVATION

Most doctrinal errors are the result of failure to understand the Bible. Failure to understand the Bible, in turn, results from not believing the words themselves came from God. Without true Biblical authority people must fill the void by turning to false authorities like Reason and denominational tradition. A perfect example is the issue of faith and works.

If I wanted to get you to believe in some traditional doctrine I'd join an established denomination in order to gain credibility. If I had the money I'd also pay to attend a "Bible" college and try to graduate with a D- or better. I might also try for a D- or better in graduate school so I could be called "doctor." Then, when I applied for a job as your preacher, I'd preach an impassioned sermon on some big denominational doctrine I knew you already agreed with. In the sermon I'd make believing that doctrine an indication that you're a good, strong, well-informed Christian – unlike the backslidden apostates in other denominations who don't believe the doctrine. I'd use some of my best stories, anecdotes, and analogies in order to involve your emotions so you'd feel good and want me to come back and preach again. In that way you'd approve of me as a denominational loyalist, you'd respect me as a "fearless" preacher who's not afraid to loudly and strongly preach a message you already agreed with, you'd feel safe knowing I was a denominational flunky who was unlikely to toss any curve balls, and you'd be titillated at the prospect of having a preacher who knew how to tickle your ears.

As your preacher I'd make a big deal of Ga 2:16 and Ep 2:8,9 if I wanted you to believe in salvation by faith alone (don't look them up now; we'll get to them in a minute). But if I wanted you to believe in salvation by works, I'd harp on Ja 2:14,17,21,24,26. In both cases I'd either ignore the contradicting verses or get you to ignore them with a bag of tricks that includes clichés, ridicule, and misapplication of Scripture such as, "They're just trying to take away from what Christ did on the cross! But I wanna tell you what, brother, the Bible says 'It is finished', I believe it, and that settles it! Amen?!"

The problem is, because people don't believe and apply everything in the Bible, they never let the presence of verses that apparently contradict their doctrine cause them to search the Scriptures for God's truth that never contradicts any verses. *Both* of the above sets of verses are correct. That means *both* doctrines are incorrect. I'm going to begin by telling you what I believe so you can get any ridicule out of your system now. That way you can pay better attention when we get to the Scriptures. I believe salvation is a two-part process, which I call **Part A** and **Part B**.

Part A of salvation is the first part, and it is a one-time event. It is being born spiritually, being born again. It is when God gives birth to your spirit body. Most Christians think we are born again by faith and/or works. They are wrong. The Bible doesn't say we are *born again* by faith and works, it says we are *saved* by faith and works. But aren't we supposed to say the "sinner's prayer" and put our faith in Christ so we can be a born-again Christian? No, only born-again Christians are supposed to say sinner's prayers. That's why the sinner's prayer (**Lk 18:13**) is always said by God's born-again people. Notice the sinner's prayer was said *inside the temple* (**Lk 18:10**). Pagans weren't allowed in the temple. The sinner's prayer has nothing to do with becoming born again; it is part of a Christian's confession to God.

Did you say the "baby's prayer" to your human parents before you were born? Did you put any faith in them, or ask them to be born, or did you do any works before you were born? You say, "But the first birth and the second birth happen by different means." No they don't. And there isn't a verse in the Bible that says they do. You got that from tradition.

Let's examine an unsaved guy who wants to be born again. First we note that he has but one body, the natural, mortal, physical, earthy, carnal, old-man body of the first birth. According to **Mt 7:18b** this unsaved man cannot produce good fruit. That means he cannot produce the faith some denominations think we have to produce in order to be born again. But, you ask, don't we *receive* the faith necessary to be born again from God – isn't the faith we're talking about a gift from God? Only born-again Christians can receive faith from God; the unregenerate cannot receive anything from Him (**1 Co 2:14**). The reason God gives His people the new birth is so we will have the capability to receive and know the things of God (**1 Co 2:12**). Unsaved people are not members of His body and are not branches attached to the Vine. Therefore, they are incapable of receiving anything from Him. Only Christians can have the **Ro 7:15-25** war rage within them because only Christians have the two bodies. If you put **Ro 8:8** together with **He 11:6** and **Jn 6:44,65** you'll realize the unregenerate cannot have the faith or the belief required to go to God for *anything*. Only born-again Christians have the God-given spiritual-new-man ability to have faith. But if Christians choose to carnally reject faith, *even the word of God* will not profit them (**He 4:2**). Therefore, a person who responds to the word of God is doing so because his new birth gives him the ability to do so. That means only Christians have the free will to serve or not serve God. The unsaved – like Pharaoh – simply do not have the ability to believe, to have faith.

Part A, the new birth, is a *gift* of God – it is *not a reward* for the unregenerate's ability to engender saving faith out of the mortal carnality of a corrupt tree. But didn't Christ say the pagan Syrophenician woman who wanted crumbs from the Master's table, and the Roman centurion in Capernaum had faith? Yes, and that faith is a New Testament indication that a person has been born again. We already know that only those who are quickened by the Quickening Spirit (Christ), which is being born again and getting a spirit body, have everlasting life. The vast difference between mortal life and everlasting life is why the Bible says the unregenerate have no life – they are dead. Dead dogs cannot produce "saving faith" because *they are dead!* No matter how you look at it the unsaved are incapable of reaching out to God. The popular modern theory that God gives "saving faith" to the unsaved so they can say the sinner's prayer and be born again is not only not in the Bible, it contradicts what the Bible does say about faith and the carnal man. Faith cannot exist in carnality, and the unsaved are nothing but carnal because they are nothing but the old man. Therefore "believing faith" is a gift from God to His already born-again saints (**Jn 3:27**) so they can learn, grow, and serve. Look at Gabriel and Lucifer before they were born of the Spirit. Did they have saving faith? Of course not *because they didn't exist before they were born!* The birth of their spirit bodies was *all God's doing*. That is Part A. And Gabriel and Lucifer weren't born of God by any different procedures from us, because when God decides to give birth, He gives birth (**Ja 1:18**) – just like any parent.

God gave birth to the Syrophenician woman and the centurion – but not to Pharaoh. These two newborn Christians didn't even know they were Christians – because all babies are ignorant of whom their parents are. This is especially true of the new birth because the second birth isn't an event that is seen or felt (no matter how many histrionics the "tongues" groups go into). They didn't know they had been given a new man – unlike Pharaoh – with fertile soil in which their God-given faith

could grow. But, like all babies, the Syrophenician and the centurion did know they were hungry. They found themselves hungering and thirsting for something that would satisfy a new body they didn't yet know existed. They were suddenly drawn to Jesus Christ and the Bible with a real hunger, a need – not just with the idle curiosity they used to have. They were drawn toward Christ in a way none of their friends was. Later, after the cross, when some Christians taught them some of the Bible in obedience to the Great Commission, they *accepted* Christ as their Authority, their Lord. And at some point they acknowledged or accepted that Part A had happened to them sometime back then, even though they weren't sure exactly when it all began. They *believed by faith* that they'd been born again even though nobody saw it, and then they demonstrated that faith by learning obedience in accordance with the Bible (Part B). Their faith made them carefully avoid the pitfalls along their Christian walk, something Lucifer didn't do. They had to carefully nourish the new man with milk and meat so they could grow into properly submissive and obedient servants. That's how we all establish whose servant we are, whose wife we are, and that is Part B.

Notice the Lord was very pleased with their *faith* (**Mt 8:10; 15:28**) and even said the centurion had *belief* (**Mt 8:13**). (Also notice in **v.9** the centurion was off to a fast start because he understood the issue of authority.) According to the Bible the reason the Syrophenician and the centurion “cometh to God” with *faith* and *belief* (He 11:6) but Pharaoh didn't is the simple fact that it is impossible for unregenerates like Pharaoh to have faith, receive the things of God, etc. Pharaoh was a dog, and dogs from God's perspective are dead. The Syrophenician and the centurion we recognize as Christians *by their fruit*; their works manifested their faith. In other words, they only went to Christ because God had already birthed them into His immortal, spirit family. Pharaoh couldn't go to God because God's decision not to give birth to Pharaoh left Pharaoh with no alternative but to live in accordance with his physical, carnal heart, which is deceitful and desperately wicked. John the Baptist, and Paul were chosen *in the womb* by God to serve Him (**Lk 1:15; Ga 1:15**), but God's purpose for pagan Pharaoh *was to kill him* (**Ro 9:17**). All of these people *had faith in no one* before they were born – just like Gabriel (who properly served God) and Lucifer (who didn't) had no pre-birth choice about becoming God's servant-children. We also know Jacob fathered a nation of God's people, but his twin brother, Esau, fathered *an entire nation of pagans* – and those decisions *were made by God before they were born* (**Ro 9:11, 13; Ge 25:23**). Those people in pagan nations were merely born once of the flesh, as demonstrated by Ishmael (**Ga 4:22, 23**), while those in the nation of Israel were born again of the Spirit, according to what the word of God teaches about Isaac (**Ga 4:28, 29**). The fact that these momentous decisions about these people and nations were made by God before they were born, before they had faith, and even before they were (in many cases) conceived has great doctrinal significance: When God decides to create immortal spirit children (by giving birth to angels and the second birth to humans), those Part A births have everything to do with the sovereign parental will of God...and nothing to do with “sinner's prayers”, repentance, “decisions for Christ”, faith, belief, and works, which are all part of our Part B Christian walk as we struggle to identify and repent of all forms of selfish carnality, and to develop into selfless servants of our heavenly Father. If you don't think all the unsaved people walking around today are *dead* you need to go back over D7, *The Quick and the Dead*. Thinking the unsaved can make themselves Christians by deciding to receive or produce “birthing faith” by saying the “sinner's prayer” is contrary to the Scriptures, shows a lack of understanding of *faith, carnality, and spirit*, and is like pulling an unsaved man's lifeless carcass from a fatal auto crash hoping even then he might decide to be born again. There is no difference.

Some may protest by claiming Christ tells us we should “first count the cost” before getting saved, which “proves” our free will is a necessary part of being born again. But if you carefully read **Lk 14:25-33** you'll see Christ is showing He is the king who counted the cost before this war started – like every prudent man does before a large undertaking (vv.28-30). Christ foresaw that His numerically-inferior army would lose to King Satan's numerically-superior army (v.31) unless He was a hard master who required His children to become strong, selfless warriors (vv.26, 27; **2 Ti 2:3, 4; Ezek 22:30**). The point of the previous parable is consistent with this; the Lord is having trouble finding enough suitable men (**Lk 14:23, 24**). (Read again the sentence in bold print and the one after it in the *Introduction*.) And that's why the passage ends (**vv. 34, 35**) by warning us salts we'll be cast out if we lose our savour, as explained on page D8-6 about **Mt 5:13**. Counting the cost has nothing to do with Part A, it's all about Part B. Trying to make it a prerequisite for Part A is so ridiculous modern preachers can't even fit it into their own evangelical practice. That's why today's traditionalists who call upon the unsaved masses to say the “sinner's prayer” are hypocrites – *they don't first warn them to count the cost by giving them a long list of hardships they will typically encounter if they get saved!*

After God gives birth, the Bible and witnessing cultivate and water the soil of the new man. With the Pharisees and Lucifer the cares of this world made their soil rocky and shallow, and during their Christian walk (Part B) they rejected the faith God gave them at their Part A new birth. But the Syrophenician woman, the centurion, and Gabriel responded to their spirit births and the accompanying faith God gave them by bringing forth fruit meet for repentance (Part B).

Let's see if the physical first birth can confirm this view of the second birth. When I was born I was too young and ignorant to know I was born, or how or when it happened. Later two people told me they were my parents who had birthed me. They said the neighbors were not my parents and that I did not come from a stork or a cabbage patch. I accepted by faith what they told me, including the date on which they said I was born. As I grew I learned through spankings that parents are authorities and their children must obey them. At first I was often a willful child, but I learned obedience by the things which I suffered. But my neighbor's son remained willful no matter how they tried to discipline him. Just before the boy was stoned as *incorrigible*, his father told him, “You're not my son.” I was confused, and my father explained it this way: “Because faith without works is dead, you can't just *say* someone is your father, you must demonstrate/prove your acceptance of him as your father by your obedient works.” (Contrast the disobedient seed of **Jn 8:37** with the obedient children of **Jn 8:39b**.) A father is an authority, so when my boyhood chum refused to conform to the will of his father, he was rejecting *authority*, that is, he was rejecting the fatherhood of the man. Without realizing the legal technicalities of what I was doing, when I submitted to the authority of my father I was establishing myself as his son, his servant.

Let me clarify something about the new birth and the Great Commission. I have said I believe God gives us the new birth without our knowledge and without our having “saving faith” – such as the Syrophenician woman, the centurion, John the Baptist, Paul, Gabriel, and Lucifer. But does that view reduce the importance of – or even nullify – the Great Commission? In fact, doesn't the Great Commission's mandate to preach the gospel to every creature support the traditional belief that every unsaved carnal human has a free will and the ability to respond to the gospel by repenting, saying the “sinner's prayer”, and being born again because of that faith?

If you accept what God says about the vastly different capabilities of people born of God and dogs born only of the flesh, you won't think we have free wills when we don't even exist (before we are born again). I know I didn't have a free will

3 D20 FAITH & WORKS

when my parents decided to have a baby – did you? But once my earthly parents gave birth to me I had a very free and independent will and had to **learn** to submit to the will of the authorities in my life. And once God gave birth to me I found that I had a *very* free will because until I learned and submitted to the Bible I had no choice but to keep sinning by living carnally in accordance with what was right in my own eyes. (The Great Commission complements what I’m saying: The “teach” and “teaching” of **Mt 28:19,20** equal the “preach” of **Mk 16:15,16**, and the “observe” of the former matches the “believeth and is baptized” of the latter.) Those days of my independence and free will are long gone; unlike when I was a young, ignorant, carnal Christian, I now accept whatever God says in His Book, and I shape my beliefs and life around it.

The only people on earth who have the free will needed to repent, the free will to yield their members to the master of their choice, the only people who have a free choice as to whether they will walk in the spirit or in the flesh are born-again Christians. Every time the Bible says “Repent!” it’s addressing Christians who have ears to hear (**Ezek 18:27,30-32; Mt 3:2; 4:17; 9:10-13; cp. Mt 10:5-7 and Mk 6:12; Lk 13:3-5; Ac 2:5,22,38**). But what about verses like **Ac 17:30** and **26:20**? They are broad nets cast over all “creatures” (**Mk 16:15**) in obedience to the Great Commission. We preach to all creatures because we can’t see the difference between men (**Ezek 34:31**) and beasts (**Ec 3:18,19**) according to **He 13:2**. Your thought process must be as follows (and it takes years to develop): “Hmm, maybe verses like **Ac 17:30** *do* prove the unregenerate can somehow produce the faith necessary to respond to the gospel and be born again. No, that ignores the Bible’s clear teachings about carnality and the absence of life in the unregenerate. Ah, wait a minute! It says “men” in **Ac 17:30**! That rings a bell! I’ve failed to take into account the little-appreciated fact that when God says *men* there are a couple of ways He could mean it. The first way is the obvious meaning of *men* from our human, mortal perspective. The other way is the way *God* differentiates between men and dogs. I remember carefully studying that stuff in the section *Saints and Ain’ts: Different Rules* on page D8-5. Boy, this guy Smith sure does let the words God uses shape the way he thinks about *everything*! Maybe I should go back over that section and see if he’s wrested the Scriptures or if he’s properly making much of the word of God.” That’s the way we submit to the word of God. By the way, on page D8-5 pay particular attention to all the info in the four paragraphs that begin with: *Dt 7...Dt 32...The unsaved...and God’s people...*

I believe part of the reason the Great Commission was given is the possibility that we might be entertaining angels (born-again Christians) unawares. For example, I believe it likely that Christians today are unaware that the Syrophenician woman and the centurion were new angels who were demonstrating the same sudden, compelling spiritual hungering and thirsting that babies have for their mother’s breast. Six months or so before the date on which I supposedly got saved in church, I experienced a feeding frenzy. I had no idea why I had this sudden compulsion to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ. I started regularly going to the Catholic Church again, going to Catholic “Christian growth” classes, and Catholic Bible studies. I read and marked up my old never-touched RSV from cover to cover, studied Hal Lindsay’s *The Late Great Planet Earth*, composed my own blessing for meals (“Father, thank you for this food you’ve provided, and for your word by which we might know You through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.”), and was disgusted with everything that didn’t directly concern the Bible. My wife wondered (with some trepidation) what was happening to her husband. Later, with moving boxes still piled in our new home two thousand miles away, a Bible preacher and another man were out witnessing and knocked on my door. As I was closing the door in their faces I heard the preacher saying, “We’re a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-teaching church.” That is what I wanted; I invited them in and revealed to them how incredibly ignorant I was about the Bible. Two weeks later my wife and I answered the altar call and walked up the aisle to the preacher. He offered his hand and asked me, “Did you ask Jesus Christ to be your Saviour?” I shook his hand and (to this Baptist preacher’s great – but concealed – amusement) replied, “Yes, father.” I came to love him greatly, but the Lord led me away from him and out into the wilderness.

Anyway, I believe the Lord gave me the new birth long before I, as a typical Roman Catholic, had any idea what faith meant, and long before I said the “sinner’s prayer” in that Baptist church. But like the Syrophenician and the centurion, once I was born again I was *drawn* to the Lord by a need to feed. Those two men out knocking on doors in obedience to the Great Commission had just the Food I craved. But that’s anecdotal and proves nothing; forgive my digression from Scripture.

My belief that our free wills apply only to our Part B Christian walk and that Part A, the new birth, has nothing to do with our unsaved free will producing the faith to “make a ‘decision’ for Christ” is based on more than just an understanding of authority, carnality, and the impossibility of a corrupt tree producing good fruit; other applications of Scripture also support it: **He 5:4,5,6,10** and **Jn 1:13** for example, perfectly complement the fact that **we are born again as a result of God’s will alone**. When you read these verses, remember *and apply* the fact that we Christians are God’s royal priests: You’ll learn that *no man*, including us, takes upon himself the honor of priesthood – we are specifically chosen by God by His giving us birth. That’s why Aaron didn’t make himself a priest; he was “called” of God. Even Christ glorified not Himself by making Himself our high priest; God appointed Him to the job by saying, “Thou art my Son/Thou art a priest.” And how did God accomplish that? He explains: “to day have I “begotten” thee.” You and I did not one day “make a decision” that we would become priests/Christians; God alone made us priests and sons by begetting/calling us and we must accept our positions as priests and get to work. (Remember, in the Old Testament the only Christians who worked seven days a week were the priests, and now we are the priests. And we’re way behind in our work.) The Bible says the Old Testament saints were, like us, all chosen by the sovereign will of God to be His priests (**Ex 19:5,6** – notice the works requirement in v.5; and **Dt 7:6**). Again, the Bible says nobody takes God’s honor unto himself by “making a decision for Christ/the priesthood”; it says God Himself produces priests by begetting them. And if they don’t do the works required of priests God will cast them out because He saved and called us *not because of us*, but *according to His own purpose and grace* (**2 Ti 1:9**).

I’ve actually gone on about this longer than necessary. I could have just said: “The Lord was impressed by and pleased with the *faith* of the Syrophenician (Mt 15:28). Because of Ro 8:7-9 and related verses, the unsaved are incapable of He 11:6. I rest my case; nothing more needs to be said.” And when we *apply* that, we realize obedience to the Great Commission – like those two men who knocked on my door – is a great way to reach hungry newborn angels who don’t know how to live their new life. Therefore, the Great Commission is at least as important from my perspective as it is from the traditional perspective. But because the actual process by which we received our new birth is not important – since it doesn’t affect our Christian walk – I haven’t spent much time dwelling on it like everybody else does every sermon every week, year after year and decade after decade. But do notice that the resurrected Christ’s Great Commission always contains *two* elements: 1) *teaching* people the word so they can then be... 2) *doers* of the word (Mt 28:19,20; **Mk 16:15-18**). And notice that when the resurrected Christ commissioned Peter thrice to “*feed*” (**Jn 21:15-17**), that word contains *both* elements of the Great Commission – when you remember the spiritual food we eat is supposed to be put into action (**Jn 4:34**). And, if Christ is giving the Great Commission

to Peter, it is interesting to note whom it is the Lord commissioned him to feed – “my sheep”, not dogs. In other words, the Great Commission’s “to every creature” is baiting the hook with Scripture to see which creatures are dogs that are uninterested in the bait, and which are sheep who hunger and thirst after righteousness. The Great Commission is trolling among all creatures in order to draw newborn angels to the milk of the word.

We tend to forget how **radical** it was to the disciples for the Lord to issue them the **Great Commission** to preach the gospel to all nations after so many centuries of only the Hebrews being God’s special people. For example, because God’s people in general believed it wasn’t proper to cast the saints’ bread to dogs (**Mt 15:26; Jn 4:9,27; Ru 2:10**), Christ raised no eyebrows when He specifically instructed His disciples to not preach salvation to the unsaved Gentiles but rather preach only to Hebrews (**Mt 10:5,6**). Therefore, even though Christ had already issued the clearly-worded Great Commission, it wasn’t until He used the vision of unclean beasts in a sheet and miraculous tongues that His disciples grudgingly accepted the new reality that God really was opening the gospel to Gentiles (**Ac 10:1,2,11-15,28,34,35,44-47; 11:1-3,7-9,17,18**). The disciples’ reluctance to preach to Gentiles should have reminded them of the Book of Jonah, which was an Old Testament foreshadowing of the Great Commission because Jonah also, when God told him to preach to Gentiles, needed special signs from God before he grudgingly accepted that he should preach to dogs (**Jona 1:1-3; 3:1-3,5; 4:1**). History repeats itself, and Rahab the harlot, the wise men, the Syrophenician woman, the centurion, and Jonah were all Old Commission era types of the coming **two-thousand-year** New Testament era of the Great Commission – as shown by Christ’s **two-day** work among the Gentiles/Samaritans (**Jn 4:39,40**), which ended “after **two days**”/2,000 years (**v.43**).

Let’s now consult the Scriptures about faith and works and see what we might learn about Parts A and B:

EPHESIANS 2:1: This is obviously talking about Part A, the new birth.

2:5: Part A is by the grace of God.

2:8: Part A saves us from the curse of mortality through faith. The unregenerate, carnal, corrupt tree does not engender that faith within us; it is the gift of God.

2:9: Part A is not the result of works. Not of what? Works!

2:10: We are *created*. (That means we didn’t exist before we were birthed by God because temporary, mortal dogs are insignificant; they are dead; they have no life in them.) That is Part A. But it goes on: Part A, which is not of works, is done so we can do good works. Those works are the way God wants us to *walk*. That’s Part B, the Christian walk. So now we know our good works, which have nothing to do with Part A since God is the one giving birth, are expected of us in Part B.

Here in Ephesians we’ve seen that being born again (Part A) is not the result of any works on our part, which makes sense because babies have nothing to do with their own births. We’ve also seen that *the reason we were born again* was to serve (that’s a verb) God with our good works (Part B). (As we study this subject you need to learn to understand the Biblical difference between generic works and specific works of the law.)

ROMANS 3:19: The law condemns. (We are going to notice the subject now concerns the law.)

3:20: Therefore doing the *deeds of the law* justifies no one.

3:21: The fact that God’s righteousness is *without* the law is made obvious by the writings of the Old Testament law itself. (**He 13:12,13** show that *without* means *outside of*.)

3:22: Righteousness is by faith. (We learned in Ep 2:8 above that Part A faith is not something we come up with. This verse repeats that.) This Part A saving faith is not “of us,” it’s “of Jesus Christ.” Note: You’ll see that this discussion of *deeds of the law* will sometimes be applied to Part A, and sometimes to Part B. Why? Because whenever you’re discussing *works of the law*, it doesn’t matter whether you’re discussing Part A or Part B – because *works of the law* are never required. By now you should know why that is true: We are dead to the law.

3:24: This, too, is a repeat of Ep 2:8: We get Part A freely; it’s a gift we get by the grace of God.

3:25: “Through faith in His blood.” That does not mean faith we come up with in order to get Part A because we’ve already seen twice that Part A faith is of God, not us. The role of Jesus Christ is now being discussed. God accepted Christ’s blood as payment for sins that are past. “Sins that are past” has to do with the curse of the Old Testament; it symbolizes the original sin that cursed us by making us the Devil’s bride. Christ’s blood satisfied God, Who then allowed us to be espoused to His beloved Son through Part A.

3:27,28: *Deeds of the law* have nothing to do with Part A or Part B justification.

Ro 4:1-4: The theme here is that justification is not of “works.” (Here it does not specifically say *works of the law*, but we’ll see that, just as that was the subject in chapter 3, so is it here.)

4:5: The Christian who believes on the God who justified him is of faith, not works.

4:6-16: *Works of the law* did not justify David or Abraham in their Part B walk. Abraham lived before the law showed up, and David ate the shewbread.

Ro 5:1,2: The results of justification.

5:6-8: Reviews the new birth, Part A of salvation. (Although we may find this is referring to neither Part A nor Part B: It may refer to Christ’s bound-in-sin, wed-to-the-Devil, Abraham’s-bosom-bound saints being liberated by Him).

5:9: Shows there are two parts to salvation. Having been justified by His death (Part A), we *shall be saved* (future tense) from wrath *through Him*. (If Part A were all that is required for salvation, there would be a period after “from wrath.” *Through Him* is walking after the Spirit, it is the *good works* we were saved to do, it is the Christian walk, Part B. Also note that words like *saved* and *justified* can refer to either Part A or Part B, while *quickened* and *born again* refer only to Part A.)

5:10: *When we were enemies* is a past tense reference to Ro 8:7 before Part A happened. *Shall be saved by His life* is future tense and refers to Part B, walking in Christ.

Ro 6:4: Part A (*buried with Him*) is followed by Part B (the Christian walk).

6:13: This is about Part B obedience.

6:14: *For* refers to the Christian walk/obedience of v.13. So v.14 says: Pleasing God with the Part B obedience of v.13 is now possible *because* you are not under the law but under grace.

6:16: Explains why Part B works are so important.

Ro 7 shows the legalities of how we got out from under the law so we could legally be married to “*another*” Husband (v.4) even though our first husband, Satan, is still alive.

In Romans we’ve seen that *works of the law* have nothing to do with Part A, being born again, and that *works of the law* don’t justify our Part B walk, as proved by Abe and David. But didn’t Ep 2:10 say we’re born again in order to keep the

5 D20 FAITH & WORKS

law? No, it said we're born again in order to do good works. In other words, we're beginning to see that God differentiates between good works and *works of the law*. But even though the context in Romans was *works of the law*, there were times when it used the word "works" alone without adding "of the law." Could that mean Abraham and David were not justified by either works or *works of the law* during their Part B Christian walks, and the "once saved, always saved"/eternal security groups are correct in saying works are not a requirement during the Part B Christian walk? And are they correct when they say the only thing the Part B works do is determine how many rewards we'll be showered with at Judgment? No, because the context of Ep 2 is Part A – it doesn't specifically define Part B works. And the context of Romans is *works of the law* in both Part A and Part B because nothing that is *of the law* ever did anybody any good in either Part A or Part B. But Romans is not worded plainly enough to really nail this down by itself. So let's see if the next two sections agree with what I'm saying.

JAMES 2:1: These are Part B instructions for "brethren" who already have Part A. Good, that's what we're looking for, info on what is or is not required during our Part B Christian walk.

2:14-16: The requirement for works and the insufficiency of faith alone is obvious in these verses. They show us that David would not have helped his starving men (the church) by merely saying, "God bless you! I'll be praying that you find food! See you later!" What he did was to understand what the word "good" means in Ep 2:10. We are created by God in order to do *expedient* works. Therefore both *good* and *expedient* mean *whatever works are for the benefit of the church*. That's why David rejected the pious "be ye warm and filled" speech and said instead: "Men, there's bread in the temple and I'm going to get it for you! Normally, it wouldn't be lawful to eat it. But we are created into works that are good for the church. That is the law and the prophets. The only sin would be for me to see a good and not do it."

2:17: Therefore, brother, if you have faith but you don't have works (good works, expedient works, obedient works, Part B works), your faith is the same faith the Devil and the devils have. Works are not an option; they are required.

2:18: Talking about faith is lip service. We are supposed to *show* our faith by our works. That is how we *manifest* God in our flesh by showing the mystery of godliness.

2:19: But, you say, you are born of God and believe in the true God? That makes you the same as the devils.

2:20: I say again: If your Part B Christian walk doesn't have works, you haven't got faith.

2:21-23: When Abraham (who lived before the law arrived on Sinai) obeyed God by doing works, our all-knowing God (Who knew beforehand Abe would obey) waited for him to manifest his belief and then said, "Now I know you fear Me" (**Ge 22:12**). The test is in doing; faith without works does not manifest God in our lives.

2:24: Compare the word works here with the word faith in **He 11:31**. They are synonyms. (And, because in the Bible there are so many places that show *faith, works, obedience, fear, love, etc.*, are the same, this verse isn't even included in the list of synonyms on page H1-2!) Let's call the type of faith/works the Bible tells us Rahab had – which is an example of the exact same kind of New Testament faith/works we are required to have – *Rahab's faith*. Here we have a prostitute who wasn't a pagan – she was a closet Christian, born again like the Syrophenician woman and the Roman centurion – even if she didn't know it yet. Her works are not only compared with those of Abraham, they actually put her in the Hebrews 11 hall of fame. We learn that God really likes doers whose good works benefit the church. And we see why those who have "faith" but don't gather with Him (those whose "faith" has no synonyms like "works" attached to it), are considered to be against Him; our purpose is to work for the good of the church in order to keep the gates of hell from prevailing against it. If we don't work, we won't eat the Marriage Supper with the Lamb. We must work to eat.

2:26: Believing in faith without works is like thinking the mortal bodies of the unregenerate have life.

Here in James we've seen that works are required in Part B. We've seen, in fact, that God *waits* for the works to be done before He imputes righteousness to us. And we've seen that a Christian trying to get to heaven with faith alone is like a pagan trying to get to heaven without the new birth.

How did the eternal security/faith alone groups go wrong? If they'd believed God's word they would have realized salvation is a two-part process. The groups that make a big deal out of Ep 2:8,9 are correct in thinking works have nothing to do with being born of God, but they incorrectly think the Part A new birth is the whole story.

GALATIANS 2:14: Paul is upset that Peter is having saved Gentiles keep the law. The subject here, therefore, is not the relationship of Part B with works (like it was in James, where we learned works are required); it's the relationship of Part B with *works of the law*. In fact, those who think Christians should be keepers of any or all of the Old Testament law are not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, are preaching another, perverted gospel (**Ga 1:6,7**), and should be accursed (**Ga 1:8**). I say again, they should be accursed (**v.9**).

2:16: Christians are not justified by *works of the law*. What are we justified by? It says by *faith* and *belief*. Why does that confuse the "faith alone" groups? Because they ignored the synonymous use of *faith* and *works* in Ja 2:24 and He 11:31 as well as the list of synonyms on page H1-2. This verse says we are not saved by *works of the law*; we are saved by works. If you think *works of the law* saved God's people in the old days, or if you think they still save us, you are like Peter and do not understand the gospel.

2:18: For if I build again the *works of the law* which I destroyed (when I was baptized into Christ's death which got me out from under the law and made me sinless), I make myself a sinner again (because sin is only imputed when the law exists – according to **Ro 5:13**).

2:19: For I through the law am dead to the law. This does not say, "By keeping the law I achieve freedom." It says, "Legally (because of Christ's substitutionary death) I'm dead so the law no longer concerns me. And because of that I can serve as Christ's bride with good works."

2:20: A statement of Part B works that manifest Christ in our obedient lives.

2:21: If doing *works of the law* accomplishes anything, Christ died in vain: Rather than dying to replace the Old Testament with the New, He could have just said, "Keep the law!"

Ga 3:2: Did you receive the new birth by doing *works of the law*, or did you accept it [that it happened] by faith?

3:3: Why go back to the very law from which you were saved? This verse, along with 2:21, makes more sense when you understand not only what the Old Testament law is a type of, but also understand the carnality of the law (as covered in D19 *Law and Grace*). And when you understand how much God hates carnality, you better appreciate the New Testament's grace, expediency, and good works, and why Christ was so impressed when David ate the shewbread – all of which stress selfless love, mercy, and maturity.

The rest of the chapter continues this theme that Part B requires works, not *works of the law*. Because we've seen that faith alone comes into play only for Part A (when we accept that something we can't see or feel did happen), it becomes clear what the word *faith*, which is used in the rest of the chapter, means. Its meaning cannot be "faith alone" because that would contradict two things we've already learned: a) Part B requires works, and b) faith alone applies only to Part A. The correct choice is that the word *faith* used in this chapter is *Rahab's faith* – faith with synonyms attached.

Ga 3:19 is interesting because it says *God never wanted the law!* He only invented it because of sin. Because this revelation is rejected by those who think we should be keepers of the law (because they think that would mean the law was bad), the next few verses show the Old Testament's real value was in its ability to *teach*.

God was so upset with the false gospel of *works of the law* being spread by people like Peter (**Ga 2:11,12**) that He continues in chapters 4 and 5 to stress works of faith, and to show how bad *works of the law* are. For example, the observance of feast days is called "weak and beggarly" (**4:9,10**), and keeping the law is equated with walking in the lust of the flesh (**5:16-18**). This is consistent with **He 7:16** and **Ro 8:7,8**.

And this helps explain why **Ga 5:4** is true. If you think the *works of the law* justify you, you are going about trying to establish your own righteousness. That will cause you to fall from the scepter of grace and end up under the First Testament Law of sin and death (as discussed in *Law and Grace*). But, you protest, isn't that exactly what I'm doing by thinking Part B justification is of works? No. And that question makes me wonder if you've yet realized what the Biblical distinction is between *works* and *works of the law*. Works, works of faith, and good works are all the same and are anything and everything that is a result of submissive obedience to God via His word. That will often include things specifically mentioned in the Bible. All of these works are the product of a selfless sense of duty that is the result of loving God and His church – and these works are now and will always be required.

Works of the law on the other hand, are never required because dead people (here I'm referring to Christians who died in Christ and are therefore dead to the law) are never expected to do anything. (Christians who are alive in Christ do need to do good works.) The works of the law are more defined by attitude than anything else – the wrong attitude. If you do the works of the law (which could be anything in the Bible) for the reasons the Pharisees did them you are in trouble. But if you do those exact same things in the Bible for the right reasons mentioned above, those works of the law cease being works of the law and become *good works of faith*.

Proper good works require David's outlook: "I'm already a sinner, keeping the law won't change that. Pleasing the Judge and relying on His mercy are my only hope. Will He be more pleased in this situation if I keep the law or if I take the shewbread?" Obviously we know the answer in that situation, but the choices you make in your daily life are up to you and God: What will please Him? Let's say you don't eat pork, you got your penis cut, you go to church on Saturday, etc., because your denomination thinks at least some parts of the works of the law should still be done. But you've not yet kept the Passover and are really looking forward to it. And a big denominational get-together is coming up for Passover, which falls on a Saturday this year! How great is that! You're all excited. But just before you jump into your car to tow your camper trailer to the reserved campground, you find out the Christian widow next door is down sick and has no one to care for her but you. And to make matters worse she's out of firewood and, because of how low the sun is and how long it'll take you to pick up enough sticks in the woods, if you help her you'll end up gathering firewood on Saturday! You've got two choices: First, as you drive off toward the campground you can roll down your window and yell out to her, "God bless you! I'll be praying for you! Gotta go keep the sabbath and Passover! Bye!" Second, please God like David did by taking "sin" upon yourself by breaking [complying with] the law for the good of the church. If you do the first, you really do think we should keep the law. That makes you a Pharisee and it doesn't look good for you. If you do the second, you believe in expediency, you believe in good works – not in keeping the law – and you'll serve God well. You see, God doesn't want you concentrating on rules, He wants you concentrating on Him and on those He loves.

Does that mean Catholic nuns who ignore the Bible and try to please God by caring for sick people are pleasing God? No, because good works must glorify God by coming from Him via *discernment* in accordance with His Scriptures. When a Catholic stays with the sick widow and picks up sticks for her, that nun is using her carnal mind to do that which is right and good in her own eyes. **Ro 8:7,8** applies. But, you object, she came up with the same things God wanted the law keeper to do! Yes, but they were her thoughts. That makes her the authority, the head, and she gets the "glory." *Discernment* in accordance with God's word makes God the Authority, the Head, and He is glorified. Our works, like when David ate the shewbread, must be under God's authority. The issue is authority.

To review:

- **Faith** is always required. Part A faith is believing or accepting that **Ep 2:10a** happened to you so you can get on with the business of **Ep 2:10b**. Part B faith is *Rahab's faith* – whatever works you discern God wants you to do.
- **Works** are always required in your Part B Christian service. As for works in Part A, because they are not possible, it is absurd to think your works have anything to do with the new birth. No baby has anything to do with his own birth.
- **Works of the law** never do you any good because the law only condemns, it never justifies.

If you remember this lesson when reading the Bible, you'll avoid the confusion that afflicts everybody else. Carefully check the wording and context of Scripture to see if it's talking about being born-again saved (Part A), or walking-the-walk saved (Part B). Then find out if it's talking about works or *works of the law*. And don't forget what God wants you to learn from *Rahab* about the true and full meaning of *faith* and its synonyms.

By the way, under the rubric of **dispensationalism** some Christians today feign a doctrinal difference between Jews and Gentiles (called in the Bible "**dissembling**", "**dissimulation**", and the "**false gospel**" of Peter and others, which was covered on D16-2). In other words, they think some "works" verses in the New Testament don't apply to us New Testament saints – they only apply to Jews. Dispensationalists do this in an effort to explain this Biblical "conflict" between what the New Testament says about faith and works in books like Ephesians, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation – and in order to preserve their belief in justification by faith alone and eternal security. In other words, the false gospel of Peter (dissembling, saying there is a doctrinal difference between Jews and Gentiles) has survived to this day because Christians have failed to grasp the difference between works and works of the law.